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The OEOP Duties of Reasonable Accommodation

Angela Coppedge

Vivian Merritt

Office of Director/ Office of Equal Opportunity Programs

Abstract

1. I was fortunate enough to be assigned two assignments during my ten weeks here at NASA's Langley Research Center, in the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (OEOP). One of my projects gave me the chance to gain experience in developing calculation formulas for the EXCEL computer system, while my second project gave me the chance to put my research skills and legal knowledge to use.
2. The function of the OEOP is to ensure the adherence to personnel policy and practices in the employment, development, advancement and treatment of federal employees and applicants for employment. This includes veterans and disabled as well. My initial project involved the research of hiring and promotion among the different minorities and females employed here at Langley.
3. The objective of my first project was to develop graphs that showed the number of promotions during the past five years for each minority group here on the Center. I also had to show the average number of years it took for each promotion. The objective of my second and main research project was to find and research cases regarding the reasonable accommodation of disabled workers. The research of these cases is to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided the necessary accommodations that are essential to the function of their job.

Body

The data needed for the graphs was extracted from Personnel Data Runs. This data listed all the hirings and promotions from 1990 through 1994. Each employers' grade, race, and gender was also shown. My job was to calculate the average number of years needed for a promotion within each race/gender group. This was done by developing an EXCEL formula that would total up the number of promotions for each group, and then average the actual time experienced for each promotion. I then developed a graph, for each fiscal year, that detailed the number of yearly promotions and the average number of years it took for each promotion. Through trial and error, I discovered that the easiest way to develop the graphs was through Microsoft Word. With this system I was able to control the design of the graphs, and produce a more informative and effective linear representation.

The results of my work conclusively showed that the promotions of minorities and women are not compatible to their representation here at Langley. Most would argue that the disparity is due to a higher number of male employees, however I found that after women and minorities are hired they must wait twice as long as white males for promotions.

For my major research project I had to find and study court cases and information with relation to the reasonable accommodation of disabled workers. The facility used most often was the Chief Counsel Office in Building 1195. I used their law books to do preliminary research involving U. S. Acts and codes, and then pulled up recent court cases from the LEXIS, and PERSONNET computer systems. These systems can be used to obtain the background and decisions of either specific cases or cases regarding a certain subject matter. My main goal was to present new requirements and rulings that have become precedential setting due to the decisions of more recent court cases. Through my analysis, I was able to assist the OEOP in their perpetual efforts to assure reasonable accommodations to the disabled workers that they represent. They want to afford accommodations that provide an equal employment opportunity, however this accommodation can not create an "undue hardship." Therefore, the OEOP office must look at the difficulty of providing the accommodation, as well as the cost of the accommodation in relation to the employer's resources. This is of extreme importance when considering the financial strains that have been placed on NASA and its employees.

My final result was over 200 pages of information. This information includes 11 cases, and numerous acts and codes. With this project I was able to obtain knowledge about the legal aspect of the equal employment opportunities that not only affect disabled workers, but of which all workers are entitled.

